

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 AID-05 HA-05 ACDA-12  
MCE-00 SMS-01 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00  
INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 L-03 PA-01 /097 W  
-----085657 140549Z /15

P R 140340Z AUG 78  
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9538  
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
AMEMBASSY DACCA  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
USLO PEKING  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

S E C R E T KABUL 6544

NOFORN

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MASS, PINT, PEPR, UR, AF, PK  
SUBJ: PAKISTANI DIPLOMATS REPORT THAT SOVIETS HAVE AGREED TO  
SUPPLY MIG-23S TO AFGHANISTAN

1. SUMMARY. PAKISTANI DIPLOMATS HERE ARE CIRCULATING A REPORT  
THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE AGREED TO PROVIDE AFGHANISTAN WITH A TOTAL  
OF TWENTY-SIX MIG-23S. ACCORDING TO ONE KNOWLEDGEABLE PAKISTANI  
OFFICIAL, SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD REPRESENT A "QUALITATIVE" CHANGE  
IN THE BALANCE OF POWER BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, AND WOULD DEMON-  
STRATE THE DEPTH OF THE SOVIET COMMITMENT TO THIS REGIME'S  
SURVIVAL. END SUMMARY.

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2. MEMBERS OF THE PAKISTANI EMBASSY, INCLUDING AMBASSADOR ALI  
ARSHAD, ARE CIRCULATING THE STORY THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE AGREED TO  
FURNISH TWENTY-SIX MIG-23S TO THE AFGHAN MILITARY, ALTHOUGH  
NO TIMETABLE FOR THEIR DELIVERY OR THE TRAINING OF PILOTS IS  
REPORTEDLY KNOWN. ACCORDING TO THE PAKISTANI DCM, TANVIR AHMAD KHAN,  
THE ASSIMILATION OF THESE AIRCRAFT INTO THE AFGHAN INVENTORY WOULD  
REPRESENT A "QUALITATIVE" CHANGE IN THE PAKISTANI-AFGHAN BALANCE

OF POWER SINCE, IN HIS VIEW, THESE PLANES ARE FAR BETTER THAN THE MIG

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21S AND SU-7S WHICH THE AFGHANS NOW HAVE, AND ARE MUCH SUPERIOR TO ANYTHING AVAILABLE TO THE PAKISTAN AIR FORCE. TANVIR ALSO ASSERTS THAT SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD DEMONSTRATE THE DEPTH OF MOSCOW'S COMMITMENT TO THE SECURITY OF A LEFTIST REGIME IN KABUL BECAUSE THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY STINGY IN PROVIDING MIG-23S TO OTHER NON-WARSAW BLOC COUNTRIES.

3. IN ADDITION TO THE MIG-23S, AMBASSADOR ARSHAD HAS SAID THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE ALSO AGREED TO ARM AFGHANISTAN WITH MODERN T-62 TANKS, AND HAVE ALREADY PROVIDED NINETY-SIX OF THESE VEHICLES SINCE THE APRIL REVOLUTION.

4. COMMENT. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION WHICH WOULD CORROBORATE THE PAKISTANI REPORT ABOUT FUTURE DELIVERIES OF MIG-23S, ALTHOUGH IT IS WELL-KNOWN THAT SOME NEW T-62S HAVE ARRIVED SINCE APRIL. IT STRIKES US, HOWEVER, THAT THE EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN ON THE PART OF THE PAKISTANI DIPLOMATS REGARDING IMMINENT ALTERATIONS IN THE BILATERAL BALANCE OF POWER ARE, FOR THE MOST PART, GENUINE, AND PROBABLY REFLECT SOME UNCERTAINTY OVER THIS REGIME'S ULTIMATE INTENTIONS TOWARD PAKISTAN. THE ADDITION OF MIG-23S TO THE AFGHAN AIR FORCE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY ENHANCE THIS COUNTRY'S MILITARY MUSCLE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PROPER TRAINING OF PILOTS AND TECHNICAL GROUND PERSONNEL WOULD REQUIRE TIME, AND THUS IT MAY BE A PROLONGED PERIOD BEFORE THIS SYSTEM COULD BE PROPERLY AMALGAMATED INTO THE  
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AFGHAN MILITARY. UNTIL THEN, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO KNOW WHO WAS FLYING THE "AFGHAN" MIG-23S.

5. AFGHAN-SOVIET AGREEMENTS CONCERNING NEW MILITARY DELIVERIES ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE PUBLICIZED. ALTHOUGH SOVIET AMBASSADOR PUZANOV RECENTLY TOLD US THAT THERE IS NO NEED FOR A NEW FORMAL MILITARY BILATERAL AGREEMENT SINCE DELIVERY OF EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING CAN BE CONTINUED UNDER PREVIOUS AGREEMENTS (KABUL 6393), WE KNOW THAT TWO NEW SOVIET-AFGHAN MILITARY AGREEMENTS HAVE BEEN SIGNED SINCE THE APRIL 27-28 REVOLUTION. OUR PAKISTANI COLLEAGUES MAY HAVE A POINT, HOWEVER, WHEN THEY CONTEND THAT THE APPEARANCE OF MIG-23S HERE, IF IT INDEED COMES ABOUT, WOULD ILLUSTRATE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SOVIET COMMITMENT TO THE SURVIVAL OF A LEFTIST REGIME IN KABUL.  
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## Message Attributes

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